

How Will Annexation Affect NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS & RECREATION?

What's There Now?

King County currently operates and maintains two parks on the East Renton Plateau:

- **Maplewood Park**, located at SE 138th St and 144th Ave SE: almost 45 acres including a bridge, a fitness circuit area, a multi-purpose court, an open play field, three picnic areas and a play equipment area. The park has no parking but is accessible by public road.
- **Maplewood Heights Park**, located at 168th Ave SE and SE 140th St: 19 acres with no facilities and not accessible by public road.

King County currently has no planned capital investments for these parks.

In addition, King County currently maintains the regional Cedar River-to-Lake Sammamish Trail site, and operates Coalfield Park which includes a play area, baseball and softball fields in the rural area that is adjacent to the potential annexation area.

What Would Change?

It is the County's policy to transfer local parks to cities upon annexation. The County would retain easements necessary to eventually construct the Cedar River to Lake Sammamish Trail. It is anticipated that upon annexation Maplewood Park and Maplewood Heights Parks would be transferred to the City for maintenance and operation. Coalfield Park would remain with the County parks system.

Renton has different park standards than the County and provides a different level of service. Under Renton management, existing parks would receive higher levels of park maintenance and would be evaluated for play equipment replacement. Renton would also begin to evaluate park needs based on city standards. At a future point, new park facilities either on existing undeveloped County park lands, or other acreage in the area would be required to address the new population growth occurring in the area.

In the City of Renton, parks that can provide facilities supporting high public use, with tennis courts, formal play fields, playgrounds and parking receive larger shares of the budget than those containing only play fields. Renton currently has a Capital Improvement Plan identified for Maplewood Park beginning in 2008 with \$100,000 for a parks master plan, \$300,000 in 2009 for construction documents, and \$3,000,000 in 2010 for Phase I construction.

Once Maplewood Heights Park is owned by the City, a capital improvement program for the park is anticipated, Renton is collecting parks mitigation fees for new plats in the area that is already annexed in anticipation of a park development program there.

In addition, Renton's Recreation Division operates recreational programming at elementary and middle schools and operates neighborhood and community centers. The nearest community center to the

East Renton Plateau is the Highlands Community Center, located at 800 Edmonds Avenue NE. Residents would be able to participate in these programs at the fee level residents now pay. These fees are typically 25% to 50% less than what non-residents pay.

Residents would also have access to the Renton Senior Center, and community center at the Cedar River Park on the Maple Valley Highway.

How would annexation change requirements for park set-asides?

King County currently requires play areas at a rate of 45 square feet per dwelling unit, with a minimum size of 400 square feet, unless park facilities are available within ¼ mile and without crossing any arterial street. In some cases, King County will accept fees in lieu of these play areas. Renton typically collects a development mitigation fee in lieu of park dedication and uses the funding to provide parks citywide as needed. Renton gives partial credit toward the amount of the mitigation fee charged if a developer provides pocket parks or play areas within a subdivision that are consistent with Renton park plans and standards for neighborhood facilities. Nevertheless, most pocket parks in subdivisions remain homeowner association owned and operated facilities and do not replace community or neighborhood parks. In the East Renton Plateau area some future park needs would be met through the development of existing undeveloped County park lands and/or future acquisition of land for park development.